

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3238

USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 2592

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, GR

SUBJECT: U.S. POLICY TOWARDS GREECE

1. SUMMARY. I SHARE AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD'S CONCERNS OVER PRESENT GREEK POLITICAL SITUATION AND IDENTIFIES FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS NOW EMERGING INTERNALLY. WE EMPHASIZE POTENTIALLY SERIOUS IMPACT UPON BILATERAL US-GREEK SECURITY INTERESTS AND UPON NATO, PARTICULARLY AS BOTH REQUIRE MAINTENANCE OF INTEGRITY OF NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK AND CONTINUED GREEK COOPERATION IN IMPLEMENTING OUR LONG-STANDING BILATERAL MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS. WE PROPOSE CERTAIN ACTIONS TO REDRESS SITUATION THAT COULD BE TAKEN BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVES, PARTICULARLY MILITARY OFFICERS, AND IN NATO BY SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS, GENERAL GOODPASTER AND OTHER NATO REPRESENTATIVES. END SUMMARY.

2. WE TOO HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING LONG AND SHORT TERM PROBLEMS INHERENT IN CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN GREECE AS INDICATED IN VARIOUS EMBTELS AND FULLY SHARE AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD'S CONCERNS. WE AGREE SITUATION HAS PARTICULARLY SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO. CURRENT UNCERTAIN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT HAS ALREADY HAD DIVISIVE EFFECT UPON GREEK ARMED FORCES, AND FAILURE OF PRESENT REGIME TO DEVELOP ANY CONCRETE FUTURE PROGRAM OR COME TO GRIPS WITH EXISTING PROBLEMS IS DISCOURAGING

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FORM EVERY POINT OF VIEW. MORE AND MORE REGIME THROUGH

ITS OWN ACTION PRESENTS VULNERABLE TARGET FOR GREECE'S
DEMOCRATICALLY-MINDED ALLIES IN NATO.

3. FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS HERE AS WE SEE THEM INCLUDE
DISINTEGRITY IN COMMAND STRUCTURE OF GREEK MILITARY;
GROWING DOUBTS ABOUT EFFECTIVENESS OF GREEK ARMED FORCES
UNDER PRESENT REGIME; INABILITY OF REGIME TO ENLIST
POPULAR SUPPORT, ALONG WITH EVIDENTLY INCREASING DIFFICULTY
IT IS EXPERIENCING IN RELATION TO GREEK PEOPLE DESPITE
ITS EFFORTS TO INTIMIDATE PROSPECTIVE OPPOSITION THROUGH
RETURN TO HARSH AND REPRESSIVE SECURITY MEASURES; ERRATIC
POLICIES OF REGIME, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO SUCH
POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE SITUATION AS PREVAIL IN CYPRUS
AND WITH TURKEY IN AEGEAN SEA; AND RESTRICTIVE, NARROWLY
NATIONALISTIC ATTITUDE OF REGIME AS EVIDENCED IN RECENT
DEMANDS ADVERSELY AFFECTING GREEK-US MILITARY COOPERATION
SUCH AS THOSE CONNECTED WITH SOUDA BAY AGREEMENT AND
HOMEPORING. ABOVE CATALOGUE OF PROBLEMS TAKEN AS WHOLE
AND PARTICULARLY AS REFLECTED IN RECENT PROVOCATIVE
CHALLENGE TO NATO ALLY TURKEY DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR
FUTURE SECURITY OF NATO'S CRUCIAL SOUTHERN FLANK. GERMAN
AMBASSADOR HAS INCIDENTALLY JUST INFORMED ME THAT REGIME
SEEMS DETERMINED TO MOVE TO SHOWDOWN WITH FRG OVER
DEUTSCHE WELLE BROADCASTS. (SUBJECT SEPTTEL)

4. SECRETARY'S STATEMENT OF U.S. POLICY WITH RESPECT TO
INTERNAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS MADE
IN CONNECTION WITH HIS CONFIRMATION HEARINGS REMAINS
FUNDAMENTAL TO U.S. POSTURE HERE THAT GREEK PEOPLE MUST
THEMSELVES WORK OUT THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURE. AT SAME
TIME CONSIDERATIONS ARISING FROM U.S. AND NATO INTERESTS
IN GREECE LEAD ME TO REITERATE MY PERSONAL CONVICTION
THAT IT CONTINUES TO BE ESSENTIAL FOR U.S. IN EVERY
APPROPRIATE CHANNEL, PARTICULARLY MILITARY CONTACTS, TO
LEAVE NO DOUBT IN MINDS OF CURRENT RULER OF GOVERNMENT
THAT SECURITY OF NON-COMMUNIST EUROPE AND STABLE FUTURE
FOR GREECE ITSELF REQUIRE LIBERALIZING EVOLUTION OF PRESENT
AUTHORITARIAN REGIME TO GOVERNMENT BASED ON POPULAR
SUPPORT AND RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS. SINCE FUTURE
POLITICAL GAME HERE LIES IN GREEK MILITARY HANDS WE
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SHOULD DO ALL WE CAN TO STRENGTHEN THOSE ELEMENTS THAT
FEEL PRESENT SITUATION NOT VIABLE AND APPRECIATE THREAT
IT POSES TO NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK.

5. CAREFUL TACTICS ARE REQUIRED TO AVERT CHARGES OF
INTERVENTION IN GREEK INTERNAL AFFAIRS, BUT I BELIEVE
DISCREETLY MANAGED EFFORTS COULD HAVE CONSTRUCTIVE
EFFECTS. I HOPE OTHER NATO ALLIES COULD BE PERSUADED

THAT SUCH EFFORTS TO NUDGE GOG TOWARD LIBERALIZATION
ARE VIABLE AND PRACTICAL SUBSTITUTE FOR STRONG PUBLIC STANCE
TOWARD REGIME THAT, AS AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD CORRECTLY
PUTS IT, "WOULD INTRODUCE FURTHER SERIOUS DIVISIONS
INTO ALLIANCE."

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6. INLIGHT OF ABOVE NATO FORUM COULD BE USEFUL.
SPECIFICALLY, GIVEN PROFESSED GREEK COMMITMENT TO NATO
AND PRIDE GREECE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSES IN HIGH QUALITY AND
EXTENSIVENESS OF ITS MILITARY CONTRIBUTION TO ALLIANCE
IT SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE TO NATO COMMENTS PIN-
POINTED TO NATO INTERESTS IN INTEGRITY OF SOUTHERN FLANK.
I WOULD RECOMMEND THEREFORE THAT BOTH GENERAL GOODPASTER
AND SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS TAKE UP WITH APPROPRIATE
GREEK REPRESENTATIVES IN NATO THE PROBLEMS POSED FOR
NATO BY THE PRESENT SITUATION IN GREECE. FOR EXAMPLE,
GENERAL GOODPASTER COULD EXPRESS CONCERN REGARDING
INTEGRITY OF GREEK COMMAND STRUCTURE IN LIGHT OF RECENT
SWEEPING CHANGES AND GROWING EVIDENCE OF FACTIONALISM
WITHIN GREEK MILITARY FORCES. AT SAME TIME HE COULD
POINT OUT THAT LEGITIMAT INTEREST OF GREEK MILITARY
IN MODERNIZING AND IMPROVING EQUIPMENT OF GREEK FORCES
IS SERIOUSLY HANDICAPPED BY EXISTENCE OF ADVERSE
CONGRESSIONAL OPINION REFLECTED IN SUCH STRICTURES ON
MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS HAYES AMENDMENT AND EMPHASIS
ON EQUITABLE BURDENSARING IN NATO. AFTER ALL,
EVIDENCE OF U.S. NATIONAL CONSCIENCE AS EXPRESSED IN
WILL OF CONGRESS CANNOT BE IGNORED. GENERAL GOODPASTER

COULD ADD THAT SAME CONSIDERATIONS MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR OTHER NATO MEMBERS TO PROVIDE GREECE WITH MILITARY ASSISTANCE. SUCH MOVES COULD BE BACKED UP BY REDUCTION OF CEREMONIAL VISITS OF NATO MILITARY OFFICERS TO GREECE. SIMILARLY, SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS COULD DISCUSS HIS
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CONCERN AT APPARENTLY DEVELOPING PROSPECT OF DIVISIVE CONFRONTATION WITH TURKEY IN AEGEAN AND DANGER OF SPILL-OVER TO CYPRUS ISSUE WHERE HE MAINTAINS WATCHING BRIEF.

7. THE SOONER SUCH POINTS COULD BE FORCEFULLY MADE TO GREECE THE BETTER. FOR OUR PART US REPRESENTATIVES, IN NATO, IN WASHINGTON AND IN ATHENS, COULD MAKE SIMILAR POINTS TO KEY GREEK OFFICIALS, MILIARY AND CIVILIAN.

8. IN MY JUDGMENT U.S. AND NATO SECURITY INTERESTS WILL BE JEOPARDIZED IF WE IGNORE PROBLEMS INHERENT IN CURRENT GREEK SITUATION. GREEK REGIME SEEMS HEADED INEXORABLY FOR CONFRONTATION WITH TURKEY WITH UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR NATO UNITY AND DISTINCT PROSPECT OF PROVOKING SIMULTANEOUS CRISIS IN CYPRUS. IT HAS SHOWN ITSELF INCREASINGLY LESS COOPERTIVE IN RELATION TO U.S. ON LONG-STANDING BILATERAL MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS, AS WELL AS ON NEWER ONES SUCH AS THOSE ARISING IN CONNECTION WITH HOMEPORTING AND EXTENDING USE OF SOUDA BAY FACILITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, SHOULD MIDDLE EAST SITUATION DETERIORATE I DOUBT THAT PRESENT REGIME WOULD COOPERATE TO SAME EXTENT AS DID ITS PREDECESSOR ON USE OF SOUDA BAY IN OCTOBER 1973. OTHER NATO MEMBERS FIND THEMSELVES INCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE IN GREEK COMPANY. FOR ITS PART GREEK REGIME APPEARS TO BE IRRESPONSIBLY LASHING OUT AT PUTATIVE THREATS TO ITS OWN RETENTION OF POWER IRRESPECTIVE OF ADVERSE IMPACT OF SUCH POSTURING ON ITS TRUE SECURITY INTERESTS THAT LIE WITH NATO AND U.S. IF WE ARE SUCCESSFULLY TO MAINTAIN STRONG WESTERN POSTION IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND VIEW INTEGRITY OF NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK AS INDISPENSABLE ELEMENT IN DEFENSE STRATEGY AGAINST COMMUNIST WORLD WE MUST FIND WAYS TO REVERSE PRESENT OMINOUS TRENDS IN GREEK POLICY.
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